

Last Minute Memorandum

To: STATE BOARD MEMBERS

Date: July 8, 2003

From: Tom Adams, Executive Director, Curriculum Commission
Director, Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division

Re: ITEM # 25

Subject The attachment for this item includes the changes proposed by SRA/McGraw Hill. The materials have been reviewed by Julie Maravilla and Milissa Glen-Lambert, members of the Curriculum Commission, Jan Mayer, Administrator of the Language Policy and Leadership Office, and Rae Belisle, Executive Director, State Board of Education.

[Attachment 1](#): ELL Support Guide Front Matter (Pages 1-17)

Introduction

Objectives

The instruction and practice materials in the *English Language Learners Support Guide* provide support for students acquiring English. This guide enables teachers to make the lessons as comprehensible as possible for students learning English with the ultimate goal of accelerating achievement.

Creating an Effective Learning Environment

An effective learning environment is an important goal of all teachers. In a supportive environment, all English language learners can have the opportunity to learn. The materials in this guide are designed to support students during this transitional period, allowing them to build the fluency they need to achieve in the core content areas as well.

This guide provides direction in helping students progress through three stages of English proficiency: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. While students at a beginning level may have some difficulty in discerning language, by the time they progress to the intermediate or advanced levels of language acquisition, their skills in understanding more complex language structures will improve. Students at these higher levels will have learned to comprehend and convey more complex concepts and relationships.

The *English Language Learners Support Guide* provides a supportive scaffold of English vocabulary, language structures, and comprehension strategies so that students can successfully learn to read while advancing along the continuum of English acquisition. This guide offers differentiated learning activities: at the beginning level, students might describe an incident or retell a story, using simple words and phrases. After students have had some exposure to English, they will begin to be more fluent in the use of short sentences. By the time students achieve an advanced level, their knowledge of English will become more sophisticated, as they become more adept at comprehending and using techniques such as making inferences or using persuasive language. This guide offers support for students at all levels of English language acquisition as they move through the English learning continuum.

The Primary Objective: Success in Reading and Writing English

As students become more fluent in English, they are more able to participate fully in the learning environment of their classrooms. As students are able to read and write in English, they can achieve success in the different content areas. This guide provides both teacher and student support for **Open Court Reading** to ensure success for all students.

The goal for English language learners is to understand and use English in social as well as academic contexts so that they can fully comprehend a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts within the academic realm. They must develop such receptive language skills as listening and reading and use them, in turn, to acquire vocabulary, grammar, and syntax skills. Students must also develop their speaking and writing skills to communicate what they have learned. In other words, they must expand their expressive language skills, so that they can ask questions, clarify, summarize, predict, justify, evaluate, and persuade. As they begin to master both the receptive (listening and reading) and expressive

(speaking and writing) language skills, they can apply them effectively to the **Open Court Reading** materials, as well as to their learning across all content areas.

In this introduction, you will find information on the individual **Open Court Reading** lessons. This instructive and supportive information suggests how to explain each lesson's vocabulary and concepts. The following structures of English may present a particular challenge to students acquiring English:

- English phonemes that may not exist in the student's home language
- Vocabulary
- Idioms and expressions
- Complex sentence structures

This section gives key principles as well as specific techniques for teaching English language learners. Later sections include techniques for developing comprehension of concepts and vocabulary for each **Open Court Reading** lesson. In addition, in-depth practice in each lesson appears throughout this guide, and constant repetition is applied in subsequent lessons. For example, support is provided for understanding difficult vocabulary, developing independent reading skills, and understanding complex sentence structures. Finally, the five levels of English language acquisition have been grouped into three levels for comprehension questions that appear with each selection: Beginner/Early Intermediate, Intermediate, and Early Advanced/Advanced.

General Principles for English Language Instruction

The principles outlined below are based on the work of Susana Dutro and Carrol Moran, in *Rethinking Language Instruction: An Architectural Approach*.

English language instruction should provide not only ample opportunities for meaningful and engaging uses of language for a wide range of social and academic purposes, but necessary instruction in how English works. It should be deliberate, strategic, and purposeful.

To help students develop high levels of language proficiency, the **Open Court Reading English Language Learners Support Guide** has incorporated the following principles:

1. **Build on students' prior knowledge of both language and content.** The use of graphic organizers such as semantic mapping or story mapping can aid in this strategy. Also, native language used strategically can help create a bridge between new learning and prior concepts or language forms. When students can reflect in their native language and make comparisons between the two languages, they can gain fresh insights into the new language forms being learned.
2. **Create meaningful contexts for functional use of language.** Creating context is essential for students to map new knowledge onto prior knowledge or new forms and labels onto existing concepts. This is why a functional approach that creates purposeful settings to use language is essential to instruction. Also, moving from the concrete to the abstract is also important. To reinforce concepts and vocabulary, use visuals, gestures, graphic organizers, and word banks. Use simulations, gestures, realia, and theater in the early levels of English proficiency before moving on to more abstract concepts like comparisons, metaphors, and analogies.

3. **Provide comprehensible input and modeling forms of language in a variety of ways connected to meaning.** Children learn language through modeling. Learning occurs when modeling is clear, information is presented in small comprehensible chunks, and frequent feedback is provided. *Comprehensible input* is language that is spoken clearly and succinctly, using structures and forms that are within or a little above the vocabulary that students can perform or grasp. It is language that is understandable with the help of visual aids, such as gestures or pointing. An example of this concept is pointing to oneself and saying, “I am the teacher.” The more comprehensible input the student receives, the faster English is learned. Students will need from at least a few days to a few months of comprehensible input before they are ready to speak at all. During this time, it is essential that they receive ample opportunities to listen and demonstrate their understanding through actions. Students will need to hear the language as much as possible and begin building useful vocabulary by attaching meaning to sounds and words. If students cannot speak in sentences in English, they will be able to say single words or make their meaning known through gestures. Even those who cannot read or write can still identify illustrations or draw pictures.
4. **Provide a range of opportunities for practice and application to develop fluency.** The goal for language learners is to become fluent in their newly acquired language. Students need opportunities to actively participate and to try out their ideas and language in a small setting, through debates, theater, interactive writing, and so on. Peer interactions give students support and increase their understanding of activities. Structured pair and small-group activities give students more chances to use and practice the language in a low-stress environment. Well-designed, highly structured cooperative learning tasks offer students more practice in speaking and listening than teacher-centered activities.
5. **Establish a positive and supportive environment for practice with clear goals and immediate corrective feedback.** Providing a safe context from which to work and setting clear goals for students creates a friendly, comfortable environment, where students feel at ease when receiving corrective feedback. For example, if a student asks, “Did you *went* to the office?” the student has effectively communicated the meaning of the question. If he or she receives only an answer such as, “Yes, I went to the office,” then the error is reinforced. One way to give positive feedback so that students can develop their linguistic competency is to model correct English. Rather than overtly correcting a student’s error, using this imitation technique has proved valuable. By using a modeled response, the teacher gives the student the opportunity to hear his or her own question again in a more standard form. In this specific case, respond to the student by saying, “Did I go to the office? Yes, I did” (or “Yes, I went there”). Simply restating the question correctly and answering it does not emphasize or point out the error, but it does encourage students to speak out, while at the same time it underscores the correct usage of language.
6. **Reflect on the forms of language and the process of learning.** Make sure to balance what is asked of students. When students are asked to perform difficult cognitive tasks, avoid giving them difficult language tasks as well. Conversely, when giving students more difficult linguistic tasks, lower the level of cognitive tasks you ask them to perform. This will help students move back and forth effectively when learning new language forms to avoid cognitive overload. For example, preteach vocabulary before students read a lesson. Have them focus on 5-7 words at a time, so that they can retain this information better in their short-term memory. Helping students reflect on their process in learning language will help them to in future learning situations.

Language Contrasts

All students come to school with a set of phonemes developed in their first language. As students begin learning English, they will find that some phonemes are the same across languages. These are sometimes referred to as transferable skills, while there are other sounds that are familiar in their home language but that are not part of English pronunciation. Equally, there will be sounds in English that are new and must be learned. These are called nontransferable skills. Linguists describe phonemes as the set of sounds in a language that make a difference in meaning. For example, when we contrast the words *ship* and *chip*, we learn that /sh/ and /ch/ are phonemes in English. In Spanish, these two sounds do not have minimal pairs of words that mean different things when one or the other sound is substituted. Therefore in English, it may be a bit confusing for some students about when to use /sh/ and when to use /ch/. For example, you might hear a student pronounce *she* as /chee/ or *Chuck* as /shuck/.

Differences between the English language and other languages might affect how students *hear* sounds in English. Paying special attention to students' developing ability to hear the unique sounds of English will help them acquire new language. Consider these differences in particular when assisting students with hearing English phonemes, especially since some English phonemes do not exist in other languages. Sounds are present in other languages that do not exist in English, while there are sounds in English that do not exist in many languages. In particular, English has a large number of vowel sounds. Additionally, some consonant clusters are unique to English, and these clusters also combine in different distributions from other languages to form a variety of sounds (*straight*; *glimpsed*) not familiar to many English language learners. Also, English consonants might occur at different points in a word than they do in these students' languages.

The Appendix of this ***English Language Learners Support Guide*** provides a Contrastive Analysis Chart that compares the sounds of different languages. To better prepare for a diverse student population, compare the charts of your students' languages to English, if you can, so that you may determine which English phonemes do not occur in your students' native languages.

For example, in English, the /g/ sound is used as an initial sound (*go*), a medial sound (*begin*), or a final sound (*bag*). In other languages, however, the /g/ sound might be used as initial or medial sounds, but never as a final sound. In addition, the letter *g* might always take the /j/ sound in the students' native languages, or conversely never take the /j/ sound. Therefore, students who speak a language in which any of these possibilities occurs will need help in hearing the uniquely English sound assigned to that particular letter when it occurs in a position contrary to the phonemic structure of their native languages. On the other hand, they will have no trouble identifying that same sound when it conforms to their own usage. Again, check the Contrastive Analysis Chart in the Appendix to compare the positions in which phonemes occur in the students' languages in comparison with their positions in English.

Vocabulary

The first language acquisition priority for English language learners is learning English vocabulary. Teach vocabulary that students can use every day. Although students will need to know words with multiple meanings, and they will need to understand idiomatic phrases or expressions, you can generally separate all vocabulary by usage. Vocabulary can be divided into three types: basic vocabulary or necessary language, general usage vocabulary, and content-specific words.

Basic vocabulary/necessary language: At first, students might need to learn basic vocabulary phrases or sentences such as, “*My name is...*” or “*Where is...?*” It is also important, however, that students accumulate the meaning of a large amount of individual vocabulary so that they can, in turn, recombine words freely when their knowledge of language becomes more adept. Thus, at first try to keep vocabulary usage simple by focusing on words for which students already have concepts—that is, words that they can readily translate into their first language.

General usage vocabulary: General usage vocabulary includes words and phrases that students will encounter daily. As their vocabulary grows, students can begin to link function and form, and they can use these basic and general utility words in several ways. When students begin to see that particular words are frequently used in one way, and that they can apply these same words to other completely different structures, knowledge is gained, and language acquisition takes place. For example, when students realize that connecting words, or conjunctions, join separate sentences together, or when they understand that adjectives can be used when describing people but also when describing things, then they are beginning to incorporate the function of language to various uses.

Content-specific vocabulary: Though basic vocabulary and general usage vocabulary are often used and are therefore needed for basic language acquisition, content-specific vocabulary refers to very specific words that have low utility usage and thus may not necessary for initial language learning. However, in order for students to understand a selection, they will need guidance in content-specific vocabulary. In addition, these interesting and meaningful vocabulary words will help the student’s growth in English.

Vocabulary Techniques

Building background knowledge and a context for students to learn new words is critical in helping them understand new vocabulary. Cognates, words similar in spelling and pronunciation to their English counterparts, often provide an opportunity for bridging the primary language and English. Students who have background knowledge about a topic can more easily connect the new information they are learning with what they already know than students without a similar context from which to work. Help students build the background information they need, and encourage them to make as many connections as possible with the new vocabulary words they encounter

In addition to building background knowledge, visual displays such as pictures, graphs, charts, maps, models, or other strategies offer unambiguous access to new content. They provide a clear and parallel correspondence between the visual objects and the new vocabulary to be learned. Thus, since the correlation is clear, the negotiation of meaning is established. Additionally, this process must be constant, and reciprocal, between teacher and student, if the student is to succeed in effectively interacting with language.

Use the techniques below to teach vocabulary:

Real Objects and Realia: Because of the immediate result visuals have on learning language, when explaining a word such as *car*, the best approach is simply to show a real car. As an alternative to the real object, you can show realia. Realia are toy versions of real things, such as plastic eggs to substitute real eggs, or in this case, a toy car to signify a real car. A large, clear picture of an automobile can also work if it is absolutely recognizable.

If, however, the student has had no experience with the item in the picture, more explanation might be needed. For example, if the word you are explaining is a zoo animal such as an *ocelot* and the students are not familiar with this animal, one picture might be insufficient. They might confuse this animal with a *cat* or any one of the feline species, such as a *bobcat*. Seeing several clear pictures then, of each individual type of common feline, and comparing their similarities and differences, might help clarify meaning in this particular instance. When students make a connection between their prior knowledge of the word *cat* with the new word *ocelot*, it validates their newly acquired knowledge, and thus they process learning more quickly.

An all-sensory approach: Students in general enjoy using all their senses, too, to clarify meaning, especially when any vocabulary is taught, almost as in a game. English language learners, too, enjoy these all-sensory pastimes, as these activities help them better understand the meaning of unknown objects. Whenever possible, then, allow all students to touch or hold things, and if appropriate, to hear their sounds or smell their odor. When you provide experiences of such a nature, the meaning of words becomes even clearer.

Finally, when reviewing the meaning of a specific word, say the word and have a student find and show the object. Teachers increase student interest when they recognize and validate student knowledge. When students have successfully transferred words, concepts, processes, or skills to solve new learning problems, a positive transfer is achieved. When these processes and skills are transferred to their new experiences in English, too, students are accelerating innovative learning in a fun, creative way.

Pictures: In many cases bringing real objects into the classroom is not practical. Supplement story illustrations with the ***SRA Photo Library***, ***Open Court Reading Picture Cards***, magazine pictures, and picture dictionaries. Videos, especially those that demonstrate an entire setting such as a farm or a zoo, or videos where different animals are highlighted in their natural habitat, for instance, might be helpful. You might also wish to turn off the soundtrack to avoid a flood of language that students might not be able to understand. Since you want them to concentrate on the visual-word meaning correlation, leaving the soundtrack on will take away meaning from this visual-interpretative connection. Students generally will be able to establish links more easily without sound, especially at the beginning of English language acquisition.

Using drawings that are sketchy, indistinct, or incomplete may be cryptic to students. When possible, select large, clear, and simple drawings that show entire objects, or use clear photos such as those from the ***SRA Photo Library***.

Take care when showing objects or pictures that might be misinterpreted. It is extremely important to avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding. For example, when showing a picture of a ball to explain the word *round*, students might assume that the word *round* means the object we call *ball* in English. The solution, then, is to show a variety of round objects or pictures that depict such items. Point out the round portion of all the pictures, or have students feel the roundness of these objects. Additionally, to explain the word *blue*, identify many different objects that are that color.

Finally, though it is much more difficult to explain abstract concepts, many different pictures on the same theme might be used to explain these abstract ideas. The word *love* might be explained with pictures of devoted couples as well as a mother tenderly holding a baby. The word *intelligence* may be understood more simply by showing a picture of scientists discussing an idea in front of several complex machines, or of students all raising their hands wisely to answer a teacher's question.

Pantomime: Language is learned through modeling within a communicative context. Pantomiming is one example of such a framework of communication. Some words, such as *run* or *jump*, are appropriate for pantomiming. Photo and picture cards are available for verbs like these, but demonstrating running and jumping is also necessary to solidify meaning. You can pantomime the word *sick* by coughing, sneezing, and holding your stomach. Words like *sad* or *happy* can be pantomimed through facial expressions. If students understand what you are trying to pantomime or if they recognize what it is you are striving to signify through your gestures or your facial expressions, then they will more easily engage in the task of learning.

You can also pantomime entire situations as well as individual words. For example, dramatize a reading selection on camping to preteach the selection to students unfamiliar with this activity. At the same time you can explain a large number of related words like *packing*, *backpack*, *hiking*, *sleeping bag*, and *woods*. The first step is to gather actual camping equipment, such as a backpack and a sleeping bag. Then, you can act out *packing* the *backpack*, putting it on, *hiking* along, laying out your *sleeping bag*, and so on. If you also show illustrations of people camping in the *woods*, the students can get a feel for the experience. Thus, the modeling becomes clear, the information is presented in small, comprehensible chunks, and constant feedback is provided between teacher and students. Learning, in this way, is optimized.

Just as you should encourage students to touch or hold pictures and objects, you should also invite them to join in the pantomime, making it an understandable and memorable experience. This very effective type of association between a concept and a physical action, or series of actions, is the basis for the Total Physical Response (TPR) technique discussed later.

Finally, it is important to identify clearly the specific words that are being pantomimed. Rather than telling students that they are “having fun” or “engaging in an activity,” be more specific and say repeatedly that while they are “having fun” and are “engaging in an activity,” this particular action has an exact name: “*camping*.” Also, have students repeat the word *camping*, and have them pronounce it clearly. Reading phonetically depends on hearing the sounds of words accurately.

Total Physical Response (TPR): Total Physical Response (TPR) is based on Dr. James Asher's work with language acquisition. In TPR, some sort of physical response—such as a smiling, gesturing, laughing, walking, turning, sitting, and so on—accompanies what is being spoken. This technique has proven effective for quickly teaching key vocabulary and phrases. In TPR, the teacher gives a series of commands while at the same time physically demonstrating them and encouraging the students to join in. When teaching the names of classroom objects and actions, for example, the teacher might give a series of commands and simultaneously model them:

- Raise your hand. (Teacher and then students raise their hands.)
- Put down your hand. (Teacher and then students lower their hands.)
- Raise your pencil. (Teacher and then students raise their pencils.)

- Put down your pencil. (Teacher and then students put down their pencils.)

Continue to build with instructions such as “Raise your left hand,” or “Put your pencil on your chair,” and the like. In this way, she is building on students’ vocabulary skills, and adding more words to their immediate language base.

Using TPR in the pre-teaching lessons will help students understand and remember the word meanings they will need during the lessons themselves. Additionally, TPR enables students to become more alert and ready to learn, as they will think of this as a fun game. Here are a few tips:

- At first, model each action. Discontinue modeling as soon as the students can follow the command by themselves. Later, check for understanding by starting off without modeling.
- Acknowledge or praise students after they complete each command. Here, cooperative learning can also be effective, as students can praise each other, or they can help each other perform the correct commands.
- If a student cannot follow the commands, gently guide him or her. For example, if the command is “Hand me your pencil,” wrap the student’s fingers around the pencil and guide his or her hand toward you. Then praise the student. Cooperative groups will work effectively within this setting as well.
- Review commands already introduced until the students have mastered them and are ready to learn more. Teach only a few new commands each day, however, as you do not want to overload them with too much new information. Remember, the ultimate goal of this activity is the acquisition of language, and not the physical interpretation of commands.
- If students do not understand, simply repeat the command in another way that may make it easier for them to comprehend, and then model the action one more time, or finally, physically guide students as needed.
- Keep the TPR activity as a game: snappy, fun, and short, continuing for no more than ten minutes at a time. This will give students the appropriate framework to then continue the interpretation of signs and symbols on their own, and to eventually acquire the fluency and proficiency that they need for language acquisition.
- Follow the same TPR process in writing activities, once students can fluently write in English. Write words featured in the TPR commands on the board, and ask students to copy them at their desks. Later, you might be able to dictate words while students write what you say without copying from the board. You can lead students in correcting their own papers. Finally, you can change this to become a more cooperative-centered activity, where the focus is on the student, and where the teacher acts only to advise.

Language Experience Approach: Another method of quickly expanding vocabulary is called the Language Experience Approach (LEA). In LEA English language learners relate their personal experiences to the teacher, who then records or transcribes the students’ oral language. For example, the teacher and students may participate in an interesting activity such as cooking or playing a game like hide and seek. The teacher might make cornbread with the students as a Thanksgiving activity and give simple instructions, such as “Crack the eggs,” or “Beat the batter.” As in TPR, the teacher can model the instructions to communicate meaning, as well as translate or gesture. As a student cracks the eggs, the teacher might say, “Maria is cracking the eggs.” When the eggs are cracked, the teacher can ask, “How many eggs did Maria crack?” Here, assorted vocabulary is introduced and enhanced. It is

constantly repeated. The teacher's simple instructions, commentaries, and questions also provide comprehensible input throughout the entire activity.

The keys to LEA are student participation in the game or activity and simple, repetitive commands, commentaries, and questions from the teacher.

Contrast: Some words are easier to grasp if contrasted with others. Here are some sample sentences that use contrast to explain meaning:

my/your: (while pointing, say:)

This is *my* nose. vs. This is *your* nose. This is *my* shirt. vs. This is *your* shirt.

large/small: (while pointing, say:)

This hand is *large*. vs. This hand is *small*.

(Draw a circle on the board, and say:)

This circle is *large*. vs. This circle is *small*.

over/under: (while gesturing, say:)

My hand is *over* my head. vs. My hand is *under* my head.

My hand is *over* the book. vs. My hand is *under* the book.

As above, engage students in pointing, drawing, and gesturing to make the meanings of specific vocabulary more understandable and memorable. Their goal, then, as new language learners, is to move from the initial stage in which their capacity for understanding English is limited and the skills to process the meaning of language are new, to an automatic processing of verbal communication (and in the more advanced stages of language acquisition, written communication as well).

Thus, students are incorporating the development of language acquisition within all their daily activities. As their language level increases, they are developing an entire spectrum of skills, which in the early levels of English proficiency might be only visual. As they proceed in ability, however, they move onward to include more complex levels of language functions, such as comparisons, metaphors, or analogies. Students are thus assimilating the various language processes essential for them to acquire more advanced levels of language proficiency with very concrete, and structured, activities.

Songs: Traditional songs, such as “Hokey Pokey” with instructions like “Put your right foot in, put your right foot out,” are perennial favorites for teaching vocabulary to young children. Singing and pantomiming songs like “Hokey Pokey” and “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes” are excellent ways to apply the principles of both TPR and LEA with English language learners.

It is also desirable to sing songs in the first language of the students when both foreign-language and English versions exist. Singing songs can serve as an enjoyable bridge into American culture while effectively teaching vocabulary.

Related Words: It is easier for students to learn groups of related words than lists of unrelated vocabulary words. While you pantomime camping, as described above, students can learn a whole group of related words quickly. These connections between words, then, as well as between culture and language, or academic background and experience, facilitate language acquisition. Students

become more interested when they recognize a connection between their own knowledge and experience with that of the newly acquired instruction. When they see, too, that this new information will be useful to them (in the case of camping, knowing a large set of words that can be applied to other situations as well as camping, such as using a *backpack* in school), their thirst for knowledge will increase.

Explaining Vocabulary

The knowledge of vocabulary is fundamental to the comprehension of language. Students will need to incorporate this vocabulary knowledge, and advance this learning constantly, in order to further develop language skills, reading skills, and content knowledge. The acquisition of new vocabulary, is essential to all learning. Follow these steps, then, when explaining new vocabulary.

1. **Define and say the word.**

Say, “enormous.”

Hold up pictures or drawings of things that are enormous, such as the Empire State Building, a sequoia, an elephant, and so on, and say, “enormous.”

Say, “Enormous means ‘very big’ as you pantomime very big.

Repeat this process if necessary with other pictures, drawings, or objects until you see that students understand the word.

2. **Ask students for background knowledge or personal experience with the concept.** Ask students about their experiences with the word *enormous*. Encourage students to talk about such words. (Have they heard it? What did they think it meant? Have they heard it used differently? Can they give you some examples of the word used in a sentence?)

3. **Pronounce the word clearly.** For example, pronounce the word *enormous* clearly for students. Then have students pronounce *enormous*, at first together and then individually.

Listen carefully and give the correct pronunciation as needed.

If necessary, point out how to move the mouth and tongue to create the correct sounds.

At this point, it might be beneficial to change the task and make it a cooperative learning experience. Can students coach each other as to the correct pronunciation? There is evidence in the field that cooperative learning helps students advance much more rapidly in speaking and listening than doing the more traditional teacher-centered activities.

4. **Use simple sentences or phrases.** Keep sentences or phrases simple. Do not introduce additional new vocabulary that would divide students’ attention and hinder concentration. Speak in short, simple sentences using basic vocabulary that refers to concrete objects rather than to abstract concepts.

Point to the illustrations or objects while you tell them the sentences or phrases.

Pantomime the sentences or phrases.

Have students say them in unison and then make up their own.

If necessary, they can repeat your examples, and then help students create their own.

5. **Write the word.** Write the word on the board.

Have the students read and write it.

Have students correct each other's work, and comment on their mistakes or praise their success. As mentioned before, cooperative learning activities really work.

6. **Review the word.** Frequently use the word during the next few days and periodically thereafter, emphasizing its meaning and pronunciation. From a limited vocabulary at the beginning, then, you will increase rapidly to enjoy a vast network of vocabulary within the next few months.

Fluency, proficiency, and comprehension are accomplished only through the constant repetition of language. Practice will increase competence and develop skills in using the appropriate tools to successfully remember vocabulary and later to tie these words to other functions of complex language. With vocabulary development you have the basis for all acquisition of language, from the simplest word, to the most sophisticated of structures. From this simple vocabulary at the beginning to intricate structures in time, then, you will develop fluency and ultimately acquire proficient language to communicate effectively.

Preparing for English Language Learners

Before Students Arrive

Ideally, you will have time to get ready for English language learners prior to their arrival, but this preparation is not always possible. If you cannot take the actions listed below before their arrival, include other English language learners you may have in your class in many of these steps. Not only will your students enjoy the additional interaction new students may bring to your class, but they will also feel recognized and validated as knowledgeable students. This will strengthen their written and oral communications expressive abilities to communicate orally, and eventually, in writing.

Step 1: Research the cultures and countries of origin of new students. If possible, meet with parents before student arrival to obtain background information specific to the new English language learners. When meeting with parents, it is always best to know something about the country this new student is from; however, if there is no time for research, invite the parents to tell you about where they are from.

Many print resources are available for learning about the cultures and countries of origin of students. In addition, Internet sites offer a wealth of information about other cultures. Also available in some libraries are videos that explain the language, culture, and history of different cultural, national, and linguistic groups. . Other sources of information about other cultures include organizations for foreign students on college campuses; ESL or world language departments at local colleges; government agencies, such as offices for immigrants in the mayor's office; and volunteer organizations for refugee resettlement and cultural support. Finally, some phone companies provide translation services for phone calls on a 24-hour Language Line service.

Step 2: If you can, try to learn a few words of the students' first languages, such as *"Hello," "Welcome," "My name is . . ."* and *"This is. . ."* Also, correctly pronounce and spell the students' names.

Step 3: Share information with the whole class:

- a. On a map or globe, have students locate all the countries of origin represented in your class. If there is one new student, take special notice of his or her country.
- b. Show pictures or videos of the various countries and cultures of origin. A new student might be able to bring artifacts or photos from home. If you have many English language learners in your class, this will obviously take some time. Put aside a certain hour once a week—perhaps Fridays—to explore and celebrate the diverse countries, nationalities, and cultures of the various students within your class. This will offer a more relaxed atmosphere, and even when students may think of this as an informal period of time, they are nonetheless participating in the acquisition of language. At the same time they are validating and acknowledging their own language and culture as important facets of their lives.
- c. Just as you have learned a few words in various languages to acknowledge the different countries and cultures within your class, you can also teach your English-speaking students these few welcoming words as well. You might even want to ask your English language learners to teach these words to the rest of your class. Here again, language development is taking place, interaction and communication are being performed, and language and culture are being appreciated.
- d. As an extension to the previous activity, you may want to ask your English-speaking students how they would feel if they entered a new culture and did not know the language well. What kind of help might they need? At this point, it might be important to ask the new language learners to participate, and to offer their classmates ideas as to how they would go about learning language in another country. The entire purpose of this exercise is to have new students communicate, but to do

so with what they know. In this way, too, English language learners will feel validated because the context is meaningful to them, and to their lives.

Step 4: Student Orientation Checklist. Photocopy and complete a “Student Orientation Checklist” found on page xv for each English language learner. In the course of completing this checklist, students learn classroom rules and locations of facilities such as lavatories and drinking fountains.

Step 5: Buddies. Find a volunteer “buddy” for each new English language learner. Buddies can assist the new student in locating the right textbooks, help them navigate throughout the new school, including going to and from classes, heading for recess, discovering the cafeteria, the library, the gymnasium, and so on.

Bilingual students can be particularly helpful with new students who speak the same native language. It is just as important, however, to select buddies who are talkative and friendly, so that they can introduce the new-language learner to the school environment and provide support. . Choosing a buddy who is sensitive to the needs of others can make a big difference in the new student’s life.

Step 6: Parent Orientation and Involvement. If your school does not already have one, write an orientation letter for the family of the new student. Parent orientation should include information such as where to catch the school bus and whether the student should bring a lunch. It should also tell parents the school’s expectations of how involved they should be with their student’s education.

Of course, it is very desirable to have this sheet translated into the family’s first language. Many schools already have these resources in place. They have letters of introduction and other types of information written out to parents in as many as six languages. In some cases, however, if your particular school does not have this additional resource, you may want to research it further within your district to locate helpful resources that may be available from district offices.

Student Arrival

Once English language learners have arrived, you may want to follow these steps:

Step 1: Greet new English language learners and make them feel welcome. While explaining that the class is going to be held in English, be sure to let them know that you will give English language learners all the support you can. In certain cases, you may want to use some words from their primary language so that you are understood. Please explain that the primary language may be appropriate at home or play, but you may want to remind all students that class time, for the most part, will be held in English.

Step 2: Seat English language learners who speak the same language together so that they can translate for each other. An interactive classroom is a cooperative classroom, and this cooperation is extremely beneficial to learning. You may also want to sit them close to you for extra help.

Step 3: Introduce yourself. Then have all students, including new English language learners, do the same. If you can manage introductions in the foreign language, do so. You may use gestures or ask for translations from bilingual students or teacher’s aides, if they speak that particular language. Ask a student to help you pronounce his or her name correctly, and then have the class do the same. Finally, students might also benefit from seeing all their classmates’ names written on the board.

Step 4: Nametags. Have all the students make nametags for themselves as an activity. Buddies can help the English language learners with this particular activity, if they have any questions. Students can then wear the nametags until they have learned each other’s names.

Student Orientation Checklist

Photocopy and complete for each student.

Student's Name _____ Date _____

- _____ Student, teacher, and classmates have been introduced to each other.
- _____ Student has received a classroom tour, including the supply area, where the pencil sharpener, recycling bin, and wastepaper basket have been specifically pointed out. Student has also been shown the cloakroom, the student's desk, and the lockers in general.
- _____ Student has received a school tour of rest rooms, water fountain, lunch area, playground, principal's office, nurse's office, lost and found area, front door, and bus stop. Student has also been toured through all the different subject classrooms, including the fine arts areas (art, music, and band), the library, the gymnasium, and the computer lab, if there is one.
- _____ Student knows when school starts and ends. (If needed, show a visual clock to convey exact times.)
- _____ A buddy has guided student through recess until he or she is comfortable going off with newfound friends.
- _____ A buddy has guided student through lunchtime until he or she is comfortable having lunch with newfound friends.
- _____ Student knows procedures for absences and tardiness.
- _____ Student knows class procedures for forming lines, raising his or her hand, taking turns, or leaving the room.
- _____ Student knows class rules regarding talking, gum chewing, eating and drinking, bringing things from home, throwing things, trading toys, teasing, or fighting.
- _____ Student knows how to say, "Please explain."
- _____ Student has learned the procedure concerning books (whether to cover them; which ones to write in; which ones to take home; where to store them).
- _____ Student knows where to locate needed school supplies (sharpening pencils, throwing away wastepaper, storing supplies, obtaining needed supplies).
- _____ Student understands how homework is handled and has sufficient supplies, including pencils, crayons, and scissors, to complete homework at home.
- _____ A buddy has helped student complete assigned classroom chores a few times until he or she is comfortable doing these individually.
- _____ Student has been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding school and has asked some questions, which have been answered satisfactorily, and with his or her understanding.

Using this Guide

Each lesson in the *English Language Learners Support Guide* provides suggestions for helping students acquire English to learn the lessons in their **Open Court Reading** classroom. The lessons can be used to preteach the selection vocabulary or the reading selections themselves. In each lesson are explicit grammar, usage, and mechanics objectives that address the functions, patterns, and structures of English, as well as in-depth practice materials.

All lessons will follow a sequence that identifies the language challenges in the lesson, previews the selection, teaches the concepts, allows for practice by students, and then comes to a conclusion with student application of the skills. This sequence can be used for Big Book and Anthology selections. The same sequence can be used for Decodable Book selections, though the lesson will be abbreviated.

English language learners can be pretaught individually or as a group, perhaps a day in advance, so that they are better prepared to understand the next day's reading lesson. During this preteaching session, you can explain key vocabulary words and build background. Usually, around 10 words will be highlighted for explanation.

Differentiated Comprehension Questions

Each lesson contains differentiated comprehension questions for different English language acquisition levels so that students can better understand their **Open Court Reading** selections. The *English Language Learners Support Guide* contains three different English proficiency levels: Beginner/Early Intermediate, Intermediate, and Early Advanced/Advanced. To help students answer these differentiated questions, a story summary for each anthology selection has been provided in every lesson in this book. The different levels of questions allow classroom teachers to check comprehension of all students to ensure that all students are engaged and can experience success across the English language acquisition continuum. The challenge is to find ways for beginning English language learners to use the English-language skills they possess to show what they know. It is important that teachers not mistake the early language acquisition level questions for low level thinking ability. It is certainly possible for beginning English language learners to demonstrate higher level thinking skills even with limited English by utilizing a graphic organizer such as a Venn diagram to demonstrate comparison and contrast using single-word answers. [insert Venn diagram partially completed]

Materials Section

Some lessons include a section that lists the pictures and objects needed for explaining key words. For example, if the reading selection contains the word *chimney*, the Materials section would list it and suggest bringing a picture of a chimney or a toy house with a chimney or show a picture of the chimney in the selection.

Writing

Students will have weekly writing assignments in the *English Language Learners Support Guide* lessons. Make sure that you are available for students in need of instruction. Later, during writing assignments, students might work with an aide to dictate some words and sentences on a topic or use a sentence frame to complete sentences that they write. While aides may be used, the students in need of

the most instruction should always be with the most qualified person in the room. Once students are reading, they may be ready to write. One way to ease students into writing is to use the following steps and have them write as a group. In certain cases, a cooperative method may relax students yet lets them learn new vocabulary. Follow these steps for writing:

Step 1: Explain the subject of the piece of writing. Give examples to help students start. You might also ask students to volunteer examples. Write these on the board to begin the process. The more students are involved, the better the results will be.

Step 2: Each student can suggest a sentence, and the group can build a piece of writing together. If an individual student does not want to participate, however, he or she has the freedom to write the piece independently.

Step 3: Depending on the capabilities of your students, take one of the following approaches. These steps vary from helping the most advanced to the most remedial students.

- Have the students write the sentences on their papers directly as they say them.
- Write the sentences on the board first, so that students can then copy them onto their papers. Next, have them check each other's papers. Students benefit from this process by interacting with the text and with each other by using academic language to question, clarify, summarize, and predict.

Step 4: At this point, the piece of writing can be considered complete. Or the students can use what they write in class as a template, and they can write their own pieces from this initial activity, changing words here and there. In this way, they are making connections in language, and thus they are facilitating the positive transfer of vocabulary, concepts, and skills, processes they have just learned and positively internalized. Finally, they can illustrate the piece. Either or both of these activities can be done as homework.

English Language Learners Workbook

Students will practice the skills they learn in the lessons that follow by using the exercises in the *English Language Learners Workbook*. Lessons will give students the opportunity to further their skills in vocabulary; comprehension; and grammar, usage, and mechanics.

English Language Development Glossary

The *English Language Development Glossary* provides tips for explaining many of the words that students will encounter in their **Open Court Reading** lessons. This glossary suggests dramatizations and drawings that clearly show the student the meanings of the words.

For example, students may need to understand the word *admire*, but some students may not know what it means. Look up *admire* in the *English-Language Development Glossary*. *Admire* is not listed, but *admiring* is. The definition suggests: "Model this word by going around the room *admiring* posted work of the students." The tone of your voice will help convey the meaning. Dramatize this definition, and then complete the steps for explaining vocabulary that appears in this introduction.